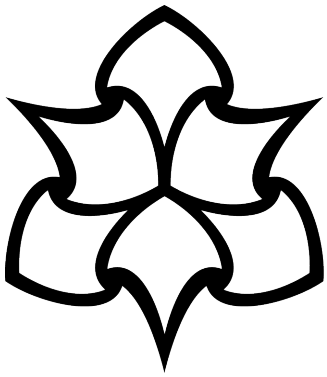

A Family Affair in the Evolution of Absolutism: Cultural Anxiety and Political Debate Concerning the Nature of Monarchy in Seventeenth-Century France and Britain.

Jonathan Spangler (Manchester Metropolitan University)

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In February 1613, as part of the extravagant celebrations held in London to celebrate the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, a recent play by Shakespeare was staged: *The Tempest*. In the play, we learn of the history of Prospero, duke of Milan, who had been overthrown by his brother Antonio, with the help of the king of Naples, Alonso, who himself is nearly betrayed by his younger brother Sebastian (plotting with Antonio). Sebastian remarks: "I remember / You did supplant your brother Prospero". Antonio responds: "True. / And look how well my garments sit upon me, / Much feater than before. My brother's servants / Were then my fellows, now they are my men."[1] In a sense the play's title reflected some of the feeling of unrest of the time, a tempest of passions, not just in England, but across Europe. Russia was deep in the midst of its 'Time of Troubles' after the disappearance of its ruling house in 1598; Habsburg rule in Portugal continued to be contested by pretenders; King Henry IV of France was assassinated by a fanatical Jesuit in 1610 and his widow's rule was challenged by senior males from the late king's family; and, in a scenario most reminiscent of Shakespeare, Emperor Rudolf II had been deposed by his own brothers in 1611. It has been suggested that *The Tempest* was mounted in 1613 in conjunction with the Stuart-Palatine wedding as a means of contrasting the situation of chaos in Europe with the dynastic calm of Stuart England, having peacefully transitioned from the

[1] *The Tempest*, Act II, scene i, lines 270–74, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edn., G, Blakemore Evans, ed. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 1671.

reign of the childless Elizabeth I to that of the family man, James I.[2] To underline this point, in the play's conclusion, harmony and 'legitimate' dynastic rule are re-established in both Milan and Naples through a wedding, that of Alonso's faithful son Ferdinand and Prospero's daughter, Miranda.

While in late sixteenth century England, the issue had been a fear of not enough heirs, in France the opposite was true, and younger members of the ruling family were straining against new centralisation policies of the French monarchy. Their frustrations can be read in the declarations or manifestos published and circulated amongst the entire political community. The younger brother of King Henry III, the duke of Alençon, for example, issued a public declaration in September 1575 that proclaimed his right, in fact, his duty as a prince of the blood, to defend the ancient laws of the Kingdom in demanding the expulsion of foreigners from the King's council, and calling for toleration while a national settlement was reached on the question of religion. He claimed he had a mandate for his rebellion in answering an appeal from many "nobles, clergy, citizens and bourgeois" of the Kingdom, and proclaimed for himself the title of "King's Governor-General and Protector of Liberty and the Public Good of France".[3] A generation later, Henri de Bourbon, prince de Condé, issued a manifesto protesting his treatment by King Henry IV (whose heir he had been until the birth of a dauphin). He too proclaimed that it was his "devoir de révolte" as a prince of the blood, against the tyranny of a first minister, as his way of serving the state which he perceived to be in disorder ("I should, as a scion of my house, and as each regarding his own affairs should

[2] Ann Kronbergs, "The Significance of the Court Performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at the Palatine Wedding Celebrations," in Sara Smart and Mara R. Wade, eds., *The Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), 339–52.
[3] "Declaration de Monseigneur le duc d'Alençon, Dreux, 17 septembre 1576," Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscrits Français, 3342, fols. 5–6.

do, take my part in the care for and discovery of the causes of these disorders").[4] Similar language was used by Gaston, duke of Orléans, the younger brother of Louis XIII, who justified his own rebellion in May 1631, by warning his brother against the ambitions of his first minister, Cardinal Richelieu, and justifying his actions after witnessing the poverty of the ordinary people of France with his own eyes. As before, he was obliged to act in this manner because of the condition of his birth.[5] But it must not be overlooked that Gaston had his own interests as well—he was still the heir to the throne, after more than fifteen years of his brother's sterile marriage.

Historians have long recognised that the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth were particularly anxious times, especially in terms of dynastic politics.[6] We can see this reflected in the themes of popular drama in both England and France. Shakespeare's plays are full of fratricidal strife, from plays describing fairly recent history, such as *Richard III*—in which the duke of Gloucester murders his older brother, Clarence, and then his nephews in order to become king—to more distant histories, such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* or *King Lear*. Across the Channel, the titles of popular French plays also reveal the anxieties of the theatre-going public: *L'Escossoise, ou le Desastre* (1601), by Antoine de Montchrestien, about Mary, Queen of Scots; and the plays by Pierre Matthieu, whose works can be seen as criticisms of the monarchy veiled in Classical allegory: *Clytemnestre* and *Esther* (both 1589)—the subtitle of the latter is particularly indicative: *Histoire tragique en laquelle est représentée la condition des Rois et Princes sur le theatre de*

[4] "Lettre, en forme de manifeste, de M. le Prince de Condé à tous les princes, seigneurs et gentilshommes de la France, sur son absence et éloignement de la cour, 1609," printed in full as an annex in Caroline Bitsch, *Vie et Carrière d'Henri II de Bourbon, prince de Condé (1588–1646). Exemple de comportement et d'idées politiques au début du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), 441–48 (here 442).
[5] *Lettre escrite au Roy par Monsieur (Nancy, 30 mai 1631), et par luy envoyée à Messieurs du Parlement pour la presenter à Sa Majesté* (Paris: Antoine Vitray, 1631).
[6] See the various chapters by leading scholars in this area in Robert von Friedeburg, ed., *Murder and Monarchy: Regicide in European History, 1300-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

fortune.[7] People in the early seventeenth century became obsessed with order, as seen in carefully choreographed court masques and public festivals. They sought an end to the chaos of the previous, religiously and politically charged, century. In Protestant states in particular, the role of the sovereign was now fused with religion, so there needed to be one head, not multiple, following the Biblical model of the head of the body politic. Across Europe there was an increased desire to put all power into one set of hands. But historians such as Nicholas Henshall caution us from going too far in applying labels such as "absolutism", as consultative bodies continued to exist all over the continent, even in Louis XIV's France.[8] The theorist Jean Bodin himself argued that an ideal monarch should both monopolise sovereignty *and* share it with a representative body.[9] I will argue here that there was also a strong sentiment that monarchs needed to share power with the other members of their family.

At the heart of this early modern anxiety, as expressed through politics and drama alike, are two intertwined issues: the succession of dynasties, one to the next, which is often accompanied by turmoil; and the division of power within dynasties, as brothers (and sometimes mothers and sisters) struggle to stay relevant in the changing power structures of an ever-centralising monarchical system. Across the sixteenth century, monarchies all over Europe were adopting new structures and regulations that increasingly centralised power into the hands of one ruler, thus excluding others of his (or her) extended kin group. In the past, this latter group had derived much of this power due to their consanguinity—they shared blood with the monarch—and this was now being threatened. This change had been long in coming, however, as monarchical practices in Europe had developed and changed over

[7] See Louis Lobbes, "P. Matthieu, dramaturge phénix," in *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* 3 (1998): 207–36.
[8] Nicholas Henshall, *The Zenith of European Monarchy and its Elites: The Politics of Culture, 1650-1750* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 86–87.
[9] Bodin, as cited in G.H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Harrap, 1963), 107–11.

several centuries. But there were many myths circulating about how kings were selected and how much power junior members of dynasties had enjoyed in previous centuries. François Hotman's *Francogallia* (1573), for example, stressed the ancient manner of choosing French kings, whereby the nobility selected from amongst the royal lineage, and placed the crown upon the chosen man's head.[10] This chapter will look back at some of the ancient traditions being drawn upon (real or imagined) at the turn of the seventeenth century, notably the development from elective, clan-based monarchy to primogeniture, and the development of the apanage system to recompense the loss of power to cadet members of the dynasty. It will then look at how this system foundered in the early seventeenth century, with the increasing tightening of French 'absolutism', and how subsequent younger siblings in France modified their behaviour to re-situate themselves into a new form of centralised 'modern' monarchy.

1.

Before turning to the deep roots of European monarchy, it is pertinent to examine closely a few more examples of contemporary political anxieties reflected in the arts, to reveal that not everything was as rosy as the official line wished to portray. In England, the transition from Tudor to Stuart in 1603 was not without its fears. Even before her death, Elizabeth I's courtiers displayed a strong desire to see her reign forever. This was not mere sycophancy, but reveals a real fear of the unknown. It has been pointed out by musicologists that the extravagant set of twenty-five madrigals published to coincide with Elizabeth's 68th birthday by Thomas Morley, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, demonstrated a clear desire for Elizabeth's reign to never end: each and every one of the madrigal ends with the chorus, 'Long live fair Oriana'.[11] And this nostalgia for Elizabeth and her supposed 'Golden Age'

[10] Discussed by J. Russell Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles and Estates* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 54.
[11] Jeremy L. Smith, "Music and Late Elizabethan Politics: The Identities of Oriana and Diana," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58 (Fall 2005): 508–58.

only grew as the reign of James turned out to be less stable than expected.[12] As pointed out recently by James Shapiro, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* appeared at the same time as the trials following the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[13] King James retaliated with a staging of the extravagant masque *Hymenaei* by Ben Jonson at the Banqueting House, in January 1606, to show that even after the plot, the monarchy was strong. The theme, as with *The Tempest*, was that harmony is achieved by bringing dynastic disputes to an end through marriage (in this case, two rival court factions Howard and Devereux). It also attempted to lay the ghost of Elizabeth to rest by celebrating marriage: the monarch is now married, with children. The Stuarts have a future, while the childless Elizabeth does not.[14] James emphasised this further by arranging the re-burial in Westminster Abbey of queens Elizabeth and Mary together, as reconciled sisters, but unproductive, with no heirs. In obvious contrast, he also reburied his mother Mary (whom he never knew, and whose policies he certainly would have scorned) in a tomb that is much bigger and more resplendent than her Tudor cousins. Furthermore, he placed her not off to one side, like Elizabeth and Mary, but centrally, right next to Henry VII's mother, Margaret Beaufort, the mother of a dynasty.[15] The message is clear, and is reiterated with the Palatine Wedding of 1613: the Stuarts are a united family ready to rule a united Britain.

But James I did not have the problem of a younger brother to contend with. There were no other royal Stuarts. In France, where Bourbon princes were more numerous and where censorship was much stronger, we do not see the equivalent offerings of plays or music that

[12] See Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson, *England's Elizabeth: An Afterlife in Fame and Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman, *The Myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[13] James Shapiro, *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 152–53, 199. Shapiro adds that the play in fact alludes to the Plot, a dangerous thing to do, but it is fine since the rightful succession is restored in the end through Banquo, who will hold three sceptres, an allusion to the unification of England, Scotland and Ireland, a project close to James's heart (208-209).
[14] Shapiro, *The Year of Lear*, 137–45.
[15] John Guy, *"My Heart is my Own": The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004), 504.

reflect the very real strife between Louis XIII and his younger brother, Gaston, duke of Orléans. Excluded from power at every turn, Gaston spent much of the 1620s and 1630s involved in conspiracies and outright rebellions against his brother. As his princely forebears, Gaston felt it was his right as a member of the royal bloodline in sharing in some form the power of the Crown, an idea heightened even further by recent writings on the mystical divinity of royal blood, not merely the office of king.[16] He was raised to think so, by his father, who believed all his children were equal, and particularly by his mother, Marie de Medici, who favoured him over his older brother and encouraged his independence, and he made sure he was portrayed as such, on horseback, in regal style. [see Figure 1] So did his powerful cousin, Henri de Bourbon, prince of Condé, who also spent much of the period in rebellion against the Crown, notably during the civil war known as the second Fronde in the 1650s. By the end of that decade, both Gaston and Condé were reconciled with the Crown, and from this point on presented a unified front, agreeing to play their part in the construction of the image of the most typically 'absolutist' king, Louis XIV.[17] The next generation is represented as blissfully unified in an allegorical representation of the Bourbon dynasty as Olympian gods, by Jean Nocret. It was commissioned not for the palace of the King, but for that of the cadet, Philippe, duke of Orléans. [figure 2] The ballets of the 'roi soleil' were purposefully choreographed to demonstrate total fidelity of every subject, including members of the royal family, who danced as satellites submitting to the pull of the sun.[18]

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[16] David Sabean, "Descent and Alliance: Cultural Meanings of Blood in the Baroque," in D. Sabean, C. Johnson, B. Jussen, and S. Teuscher, eds. *Blood and Kinship: Matter for Metaphor from Ancient Rome to the Present*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 144–74. See also Richard A. Jackson, "Peers of France and Princes of the Blood," *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 1 (1971): 27–46.

[17] For overviews of the rebellions and reconciliations of these princes, see Pierre Gatulle, *Gaston d'Orléans. Entre mécénat et impatience du pouvoir* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2012); and Katia Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé: Rebelles, courtisans et mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1999).

[18] See Ellen McClure, *Sunspots and the Sun King: Sovereignty and Mediation in Seventeenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); and Georgia Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Yet even amidst this domestic bliss of the 1660s, we can take note of a play by Jean Racine, *La Thébaïde* (1664), performed only three years after the death of the King's uncle, Gaston d'Orléans. The play is subtitled 'Les frères ennemis', and the main theme of the play is about how royal power should not be divided. Eric Heinze has recently analysed this play in the light of political situation in seventeenth-century France, but curiously draws no parallels with contemporary events in French history (Gaston is never mentioned), but instead relies on more familiar (to Anglophone readers) English history, and the writings of Shakespeare.[19] In this play, twin brothers Eteocles and Polynices struggle over their father's throne in Thebes. At his death, King Oedipus had decreed they would share the throne, ruling in turn, one year each. Eteocles takes power first, and insists on absolute rule, rejecting any regime of divided or alternating sovereignty. As pointed out by Heinze, playwrights like Shakespeare or Racine did not espouse any particular political stance, but explored options, discourses relevant to their times. Here it is the discourse about absolutism, and it is, fittingly, given the context of the 1660s in France, the voice of the twins' uncle, Creon, who declaims most strongly the desire for absolutism and undivided rule: "The State's best served when just one king's in charge, / Who will apply the laws consistently / To commoners and to nobility."[20] Is this the voice of young Louis XIV's own uncle, having learned from past transgressions?

There are two different means of validating monarchical rule at play in the *Thébaïde* and in contemporary thought: Polynices claims the throne by lineal descent. Eteocles claims it by the will of the people who appreciate his merit, his fitness to rule. His brother lost this popular support by allying with the enemy of Thebes (Argos), and even using their troops to invade his own country, stoking fears that Polynices might rule merely as the puppet of his

[19] Eric Heinze, "'This power isn't power if it's shared': Law and Violence in Jean Racine's *La Thébaïde*," *Law and Literature* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 76–109.
[20] Racine, *La Thébaïde*, 1.5.242-44, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Georges Forestier (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

allies—he has even married the enemy's daughter to gain support for his claims.[21] The parallels with Gaston d'Orléans are striking: not only had he rebelled with support of France's enemy, Spain, he had married the sister of one of the chief allied princes in Spanish service, Duke Charles IV of Lorraine, an avowed personal enemy of Gaston's brother, Louis XIII. To audiences viewing Racine's play in 1664, it is inconceivable that the similarity would go unnoticed. The court of Louis XIV from the outside may have looked happy and unified, but the almost continual domestic squabbles and sexual scandals involving the King, his brother, Philippe, and his sister-in-law (Philippe's wife), Henriette-Anne, reveal far more cracks in the façade and a continued need to address the issue of how to deal with younger members of any royal house. So how have previous monarchical traditions dealt with this issue?

2.

The relationship between a sovereign and his or her dynasty fluctuated across time and varied from place to place. In general, however, most European monarchical systems shifted from a form of 'corporate monarchy', in which power was shared by members of a ruling clan, to a more unitary system, whereby authority was consolidated within a single person or lineage, to the exclusion of the wider kin group. The former system is known to historians of the later Classical era and early Middle Ages as prevalent amongst the Germanic and Celtic tribes of northern and western Europe, while the latter system was developed by the Mediterranean societies, and gradually diffused northwards through the efforts of Christian missionaries. The Germans and the Celts supposedly chose their rulers as the strongest amongst a kin

[21] Heinze, "'This power isn't power," 93–94. Eteocles presents undivided rule as the people's preference. And in response Polynices denigrates the will of the people as a legitimate form of choosing a government, in a passage perhaps frighteningly applicable to politics in the 21st century: "Shall I be judged by fickle men whose vices / Tie them to this usurper, make him proud? / Fine reason never steers a lowly crowd. / I've seen how base our Theban folk can be. / They chased me once; of course they don't want me. / They cannot tell the tyrant from the victim." [Racine, *La Thébaïde*, 2.3.535-42].

group through election, while the Romans and Christians limited this choice to the son of a king, born in legitimate marriage. A short survey of some of the vast literature on this topic helps us to see that this issue is more in fact more complex.

As far back as 1941, Philip Grierson warned against accepting the prevailing Romantic-Nationalistic viewpoint that the early Germanic 'folk' elected their kings from amongst a royal kin group, as a sign of their noble virtue and commitment to democratic and egalitarian values (popular, if contradictory, ideas in the late nineteenth century).[22] In his survey of three groups (Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Lombards) he found instead that strong kings were able to create hereditary dynasties, and weak kings were replaced by election as needed. And when the newer system (monogamy and distaste for illegitimacy brought in by Christianity) was introduced to one of these groups (the Lombards) the result was a weakening of the pool of leadership and the collapse of the monarchy. This idea is supported by more recent scholarship on other similar groups, for example the medieval Norwegian monarchy, or the kingdom of the DálRiata in what is now south-west Scotland. In both cases, the system of selection from amongst a wider kin group was preferable in societies that were thinly spread across a large geographical region and relied on strength and experience to defend the community against persistent enemy attack. In the Norwegian case, even after the introduction of Christianity in the mid-twelfth century, the older tradition persisted: as Jenny Jochens points out, from the ninth to the thirteenth century all kings were adulterous, and almost all contenders for the throne (of which there were no fewer than forty-six between 1130 and 1240!) were illegitimate.[23] In the case of the DálRiata, Ian Whitaker argues that the

[22] Philip Grierson, "Election and Inheritance in Early Germanic Kingship," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 7, no. 1 (1941): 1–22. For a more recent discussion of these issues, see the essays in the collection by Frédérique Lachaud and Michael Penman, eds., *Making and Breaking the Rules: Succession in Medieval Europe, c.1000–c.1600*(Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).
[23] Jenny M. Jochens, "The Politics of Reproduction: Medieval Norwegian Kingship," *The American Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (April 1987): 327–49 (333 and 340).

Irish system of tanistry, that is, the operation of a circulating succession whereby kingship passes back and forth between lineages descended from a common ancestor, served both to keep the segments of a lineage apart and also to maintain the solidarity of the dynasty within a dispersed group.[24] This system can also be found in a much later society, that of the Ottomans in early modern Europe, or even in some modern Arab monarchies today (such as Saudi Arabia), where succession is governed by seniority, the eldest male, and not father to son.

But we must not assume that this was naturally a progression from a 'barbaric' system to a more efficient 'modern' one: as Frederick Biggs has explained in a recent analysis of the epic poem *Beowulf*, contemporaries writing at the time of the change from pagan to Christian customs in the Germanic world were aware of the flaws in both succession systems: the problem of too many heirs in the former, leading to violence and civil war, and the problem of too few in the latter, leading to dynastic extinction or weak or child rulers.[25] Looking more specifically at France, Jenny Jochens has summarised the changing relationship between legitimacy and religion in the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties: numerous offspring made it possible for the first Frankish dynasty, the Merovingians—ignoring the demands of Churchmen to favour monogamy and legitimacy for royal succession—to sustain dynastic rule for three-hundred years, from the fifth to the eighth century. Their successors, the Carolingians, replaced polygyny with serial monogamy, facilitated by easy divorce and combined with extramarital sexual activities. Nevertheless, as the Church took greater hold over society from the mid-eighth century, a tendency emerged to sift the candidates through a screen of legitimacy. In principal, illegitimacy was not an unsurmountable barrier, but it

[24] Ian Whitaker, "Regal Succession Among the Dálriata," *Ethnohistory* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 1976): 343–63.
[25] Frederick M. Biggs, "The Politics of Succession in *Beowulf* and Anglo-Saxon England," *Speculum* 80, no. 3 (July 2005): 709–41.

required a special act from the king and approval from the leaders of the country.[26] Across the Channel, Anglo-Saxon kings were also serial monogamists, and both legitimate and illegitimate could succeed. This all changed, ironically, after the conquest by William the Bastard in 1066. A real signal of the change occurs in 1120, when King Henry I, in default of a legitimate son, named his daughter, Matilda, as his sole heir, and not his very able bastard son, Robert of Gloucester.[27]

This change from a horizontal, clan-based system of succession to one that is more vertical, based on a more nuclear family, or dynasty, reflects changes occurring in the monarchies of Capetian France and Norman England. These kingdoms were strengthening the rule of a single lineage or dynasty through the establishment of primogeniture, whereby the eldest son inherits all, and by the practice of associative monarchy, where the king associates his throne with his eldest son within his lifetime, allowing the son to succeed unquestioned. This system was designed to avoid civil wars between siblings or cousins, and to consolidate power in a single lineage rather than continuing to divide the patrimony into smaller and smaller polities as Germanic custom had previously dictated. Even if this system did sometimes produce weak kings (children or insane), its benefits outweighed the disadvantages. This is the classic view as delivered in older texts, such as Robert Fawtier's *Capetian Kings of France (987–1328)* from 1960,[28] but has more recently been challenged by historians like Andrew W. Lewis who has argued that this system is neither completely new, nor was it an innovation of the Capetians, but a practice being developed by contemporary magnates all across the region, including by the Germans, who, according to traditional

[26]Jochens, "Politics of Reproduction", 329-30; but see also a different view in Régine Le Jan, "La sacralité de la royauté mérovingienne," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 58, no. 6 (2003): 1217–41.
[27] Chris Given-Wilson and Alice Curteis, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 74-77.
[28] Robert Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy & Nation (987–1328)* (London: Macmillan, 1960).

orthodoxy, were supposedly left behind in this innovation, and thus failed to centralise and create a viable state—the classic nineteenth-century *étatiste* point of view.[29] The older argument had been that the Capetians developed the system of associative kingship in order to defend their rule against other rival dynasties, but Lewis demonstrates that the only serious challenges to royal successions in tenth and eleventh-century France came from within the dynasty, by younger sons eager for a change to share in royal power.[30] Similarly, it is a mistake to attribute to the Capetians any sense of conscious state-building by refusing to divide the royal patrimony like their predecessors (again, following a nationalist myth), as recently explained by Nicholas Henshall: "The urge for dynastic acquisition, regardless of strategy or territorial logic, constantly cut across the possibility of any internal cohesion."[31] Even a great state builder like the Great Elector of Brandenburg, the instigator of the rise of Prussia, in his will of 1688, adhered to Germanic custom and divided up his territories between his sons (though this was nullified at his death).[32]

3.

This brings us back to the question of the younger son, the sibling's desire for power, and the idea of 'corporate' or collective monarchy. While consolidation of rule over the throne itself prevailed in France from the tenth and eleventh centuries, especially in ideology and formal representation, nevertheless both countries in practice continued to have a symbolic leader who wore the crown, supported and advised by the other senior members of his family: the queen mother, the royal uncles, and so on. As Lawrence Bryant has pointed out, the uses of ceremonial in medieval and renaissance monarchy in France served to strengthen links

[29] Andrew W. Lewis, "Anticipatory Association of the Heir in Early Capetian France," *American Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (Oct. 1978): 906–27; see also his *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies in Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981).
[30] Lewis, "Anticipatory Association," 908–9.
[31] Henshall, *Zenith of Monarchies*, 9–10.
[32] Ferdinand Schevill, *The Great Elector* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 394–99.

between the crown, the royal family and the elites through 'imaging politics', creating spectacles (coronations, entries, opening of estates general, funerals) to formulate and display a collective identity by association with the royal body, and not simply to exalt a single ruler. It is only late in the period (the seventeenth century) that the monarch is established as the sole political embodiment of ritual and 'national' identity.[33]

For this reason, it was important for medieval monarchies in France (and in its neighbours, England, Castile, Portugal) to create a system whereby younger sons of kings were included in the overall sense of dynastic glory and authority, yet were not a threat to the actual wielding of power by the head of the family, the king. They had to be both powerful and not too powerful. As we have seen, the earlier Germanic system of dividing up the state at the death of each successive monarch caused fragmentation and dissent. The early Capetians instead held on to their power by embracing primogeniture, and, while seeing the necessity to provide an income for younger sons, encouraged these to provide for themselves, to add to the overall glory of the dynasty by marrying wealthy heiresses or conquering foreign lands. And some did this, very well: Philippe, second son of Philippe II, was given very little, but married the heiress of the county of Boulogne; Robert, fifth son of Louis IX, was given the small county of Clermont, but enlarged his holdings by marrying the heiress of the lords of Bourbon. Good examples of early conquering cadets include Pierre de Courtenay set out to claim Constantinople in 1216, or Charles de France, Count of Anjou, who successfully conquered the kingdom of Sicily in 1266.

[33] Lawrence Byrant, *Ritual, Ceremony and the Changing Monarchy in France, 1350–1789* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 1-2.

The system of granting much larger portions of the royal domain to younger sons got underway with the deathbed settlement made by Louis VIII (1225), which involved granting nearly one-third of the entire domain to his sons: Artois for Robert, Anjou and Maine for Jean (later Charles), and Poitiers and Auvergne for Alphonse. At this point, the monarchy was not so concerned with the details of these land grants, and it was mostly through luck that Poitou, Auvergne and ultimately Anjou soon returned to the Crown in default of heirs—but this was not to be the case with Artois, which was effectively lost to the dynasty until the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659! But the older ideas of encouraging foreign conquest remained: Philip III gave the county of Valois to his son Charles, a modest gift, as he was expecting great victories from him in claiming the kingdom of Aragon (and later his even wilder aspirations in Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire. When these failed, however, Charles's apanage was augmented by his elder brother (now king, Philip IV), with the rich lands of Anjou, Maine, Alençon and Chartres.[34]

Philip IV and his immediate successors also recognised the need to delineate more carefully the honours and the restrictions of the junior princes as *apanagistes*. Between 1297 and 1328, all apanages were created with peerages attached, associating all such princes formally (not just by tradition) with the ceremonial aspects of the state, as well as the more administrative functions of government, as members of the highest law courts in the kingdom.[35] More specifically, appearing for the first time in the grant of an apanage in 1297, was a clause reserving for the king 'superioritas et resortum': sovereignty and appellate jurisdiction. Finally, from 1314, most creations specified *male only* succession.[36] As Robert

[34] Fawtier, *Capetian Kings of France*, 165–67.
[35] The peers formally acclaimed the monarch as "the choice of the nation" and participated in his coronation. On French peers, see Christophe Levantal, *Ducs et pairs et duchés-pairies laïques à l'époque moderne, 1519–1790* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1996).
[36] There are few recent studies of the institution of apanage: a scholarly website that brings together a great deal of excellent information is François Velde's "Heraldica": http://www.heraldica.org/topics/france/apanage.htm.

Fawtier has pointed out, this system also had the added benefit of aiding the dynasty in acquiring or assimilating new territories into the royal domain: the county of Toulouse was conquered and given to Alphonse, younger brother of Louis IX, in 1249, and when he died in 1271 with no heir, the French Crown easily stepped in. The same process was used to amalgamate the rich County of Champagne, via its acquisition through marriage by Philip IV of France. More theoretically, the qualities of the dynasty could be extended to its members to raise the status of the entire clan—the king of France could not do homage to anybody, and so too claimed his brothers: Alphonse held his important lordships in the apanage of Poitiers, but would not do homage for them to bishop of Poitiers, thus they too became by default part of the royal domain.[37] The age of major apanage creations came in the middle of the fourteenth century, with the creation of major princely lineages in Anjou (1360), Berry (1360), Burgundy (1363), and Orléans (1392). Again, these were encouraged to spread out and conquer: Anjou in Provence, Lorraine and Naples-Sicily, Burgundy in the Low Countries, and Orléans in Milan. But did this satisfy the ambitions of the princes of the blood with regard to their feeling that they were, by birth, entitled to a share in the internal affairs of the French kingdom? Not at all, as can be seen by the nearly constant state of civil war and cousinly vendetta that marks the fifteenth century in France.[38]

Across the Channel, we can see a similar development of the apanage with the granting of earldoms to younger sons (notably Cornwall in 1225 to the second son of King John), and the encouragement of others to marry great heiresses of earldoms (Lancaster, Leicester, Derby, Norfolk, Kent). In an interesting case of parallel development, at the same time as the major apanages were created for French cadets, Edward III created a series of royal dukedoms for

[37] Fawtier, *Capetian Kings of France*, 82, 123–24.
[38] For an overview, see Graeme Small, *Late Medieval France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

his own younger sons: Clarence for Lionel and Lancaster for John in 1361; and York for Edmund and Gloucester for Thomas in 1385.[39] This system is different from the French system, however, in that none of these duchies were compact territorial units in the way the French apanages were, and the rights of the apanagists were never as extensive. Here too, it is fairly obvious that this system of regulating princely ambitions did not create lasting peace and harmony, but instead generated a bloody feud now known as the 'Wars of the Roses'. Looking further afield, we can see similar dynastic disunion and bloody conflict in the kingdoms of Iberia (where similar apanage systems existed). Less so in the Empire, where Germanic custom was stronger, and apanages created for second sons continued to develop into nearly separate states, as in Saxony, Bavaria or Austria. In the latter, for example, the junior lines continued to be separated from the main line in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (in Styria, in Tirol), and were held together by the House strategy of keeping all of the dynastic territories within one of the Imperial Circles, and with only singular representation, not multiple, at the Imperial Diet. Again, it was only through dynastic luck that these lines eventually died out, and Habsburg lands re-united in the person of Leopold I in 1665.[40]

The inter-dynastic strife in both England and France had the unplanned benefit of reducing some of the pressures on the royal house to provide for younger sons or junior branches of the dynasty. In England there were no legitimate patrilineal branches of the Plantagenet House left standing (though agnatic kin lines would of course remain to haunt the reigns of the Tudors), and one by one the collateral branches of the House of France died out, leaving

[39] Charles Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community*. 2nd ed.(London: Routledge, 1996), 43–47.
[40] Thomas Winkelbauer, "Separation and Symbiosis: The Habsburg Monarchy and the Empire in the Seventeenth Century," in R. J. W. Evans and Peter H. Wilson, eds., *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495–1806: A European Perspective*(Leiden: Brill, 2012), 167–75.

only one, the Bourbons, to contest the authority of the senior line after 1525. Nevertheless, the idea of granting apanages to younger sons remained unquestioned, and by the series of edicts of Moulins in 1566, Charles IX not only continued to create apanages for his younger brothers (Anjou for Henri, Alençon for François), he augmented some of their powers that had been uncertain, for example the power to appoint parish priests and local judicial officers, or to collect taxes on fief holders in default of heirs or those of foreign birth.[41]

The issue is wider than simply intra-familial; it touched on debates concerning the wider political society and the nature of the monarchy itself and its relationship with its people. J. Russell Major has written about one of the last cases in which the rights of royal blood versus popular will is debated: on death of Louis XI in 1483, the King's will indicated his desire that his young son, Charles VIII, would be governed by his elder sister, Anne de Beaujeu. But the late king's cousin, Louis, duc d'Orléans, challenged this as the closest male in the family, and was supported by most of the French magnates. The Regent Anne summoned an Estates General, where her client, Philippe Pot, Seigneur de la Roche, made a speech about how power derived from the people, and that it was the job of the Estates therefore to place the government in the most trustworthy hands. He evoked the ancient historical practice of the Frankish kings being elected by "the sovereign people", and concluded that if the rule of the commonwealth "devolves neither upon any one prince, nor upon several princes, nor upon all of them together, it must of necessity return to the people from whom it came…".[42] The duke of Orléans' challenge failed in the Estates, but he took to the field in armed rebellion instead.

[41] "Edit sur l'inalienabilité du domaine de la couronne," printed in Isambert, Decrusy and Taillandier, eds., *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, depuis l'an 420, jusqu'à la révolution de 1789*(Paris: Belin-Leprieur, 1829), vol. XIV, part 1, 185–89.
[42] Speech quoted in Jehan Masselin, *Journal des états généraux de France tenus à Tours en 1484*, ed. A. Bernier (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1835), 146–51.

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The tradition of rebellion and the claims of the dukes of Alençon and Orléans and the prince of Condé mentioned at the start of this essay were therefore a part of a long tradition of such statements. And all three followed a similar trajectory of leaving the court to demonstrate their dissatisfaction, and residing for a time at the court of a foreign power, almost always in Brussels: Gaston, duke of Orléans, in particular did this, more than once, in the period when his position as member of the royal family was most challenged—despite being the heir until the birth of the Dauphin in 1638.[43] But later in life, Gaston changed, transforming his 'duty to revolt' into a duty to act the part of a royal prince through patronage rather than politics. Instead of a constant rebel, he became instead one of the greatest patrons of the arts (painting, poetry, ballet, theatre, architecture) of the middle of the seventeenth century.[44] This conversion from rebel to maecenas was witnessed and emulated by Gaston's nephew and successor as duke of Orléans, Philippe, the younger brother of Louis XIV. He and younger brothers who followed would follow a different path for self-representation of their princely status through the arts rather than through rebellion.[45]

And even though the parallel cannot be seen with such intensity in Britain, where James I had no younger brother, nor did Charles I (though he was himself a second son until the death of his older brother in 1612), by looking once more at contemporary concerns reflected in the theatrical works of Shakespeare, we can see that the notions of primogeniture versus division within the royal family were still present in the public discourse of early seventeenth-century

[43] For a good overview of the reasons for, and the resolutions of, Gaston's periods of rebellion, nearly continuous between 1626 and 1638, see Georges Dethan, *La Vie de Gaston d'Orléans* (Paris: Fallois, 1992).
[44] This is the main theme of the biography by Pierre Gatulle, *Gaston d'Orléans. Entre mécénat et impatience du pouvoir* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2012), reflected clearly in his choice of the books three main subdivisions, which in English are roughly: "The dream of a possible sovereignty, or the apprenticeship of submission"; "The impatience for power"; and "The prince as man of character and the burlesque prince".
[45] See this author's, "Expected, then Passed Over: Second Sons in the French Monarchy of the 17th Century," in Valerie Schutte, ed., *Unexpected Heirs in Early Modern Europe: Potential Kings and Queens* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, in press).

Britain. When King Lear decides to divide his kingdom between his daughters, there is protest from members of his family and other members of the nobility. Ronald Colley has recently pointed out that these concerns were not merely fictional, but were rooted in very real concerns of the day: would James I try to unify England, Scotland and Ireland into one centralised union? Or would he perhaps offer one of these three crowns to a younger son? James had in fact made his desire to hold together all three crowns clear, as he advised his eldest son Henry in his *Basilicon Doron*: "make your eldest sonne Isaac, leaving him all your kingdoms: and provide the rest with private possessions: Otherwayes by deviding your kingdoms, yee shall leave the seed of division and discord among your posteritie."[46] But Lear says the opposite, who misguidedly hopes "that future strife / May be prevented" by the division of his kingdom.[47]

Was primogeniture really the best system of passing on a succession to the benefit of an entire dynasty? Joan Thirsk has observed that "the temper of the literature [on primogeniture] changed noticeably in the middle of James I's reign, and subsequently developed into a more serious debate on the disadvantages of primogeniture for society as a whole."[48] Cooley demonstrates that political tracts from the period testify to the potentially treasonous resentment often attributed to younger sons, as in John Earle's early seventeenth-century *Micro-cosmographie* which included a character "Younger Brother", who "loves not his country for this unnatural custome [primogeniture], and would have long since revolted to the Spaniard, but for Kent onely which he holds in admiration", Kent being the one county in

[46] *Basilicon Doron*, in J. Sommerville, ed., *King James VI and I: Political Writings* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 42
[47] *King Lear*, I.i.44-45, as quoted by Ronald Cooley, "Kent and Primogeniture in *King Lear*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 48, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 327–48 (at 332).
[48] Joan Thirsk, "Younger Sons in the Seventeenth Century," *History* 54, no. 182 (October 1969): 358–77 (at 361).

England in which partible inheritance (called *gavelkind*) prevailed.[49] This of course has an interesting parallel with the actions of the prince de Condé and Gaston d'Orléans entering Spanish service to protest their own exclusion from the government of France in this same period.

The conclusions to be drawn are not definitive. While we do see that second sons in the major monarchies of Europe act as fiercely loyal adjuncts to their elder brothers by the end of the century—with clear examples offered by Philippe, duc d'Orléans or James, duke of York—we also see upsets and continued strainings for power, for example in the cabal of the Grand Dauphin, waiting and waiting for the aging Sun King to pass on; or more extremely, in the willingness of William of Orange to overthrow his uncle and father-in-law in the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. And although certainly no European monarchy in the later early modern period allowed for princely brothers to rule as co-sovereigns, some did divide up territory to provide for younger sons (notable examples include the secundogenitures for the Bourbons in Naples from 1734, or for the Habsburgs in Tuscany from 1765), and some bitter divisions remained between branches of cousins (the Orléanists as leaders of the opposition in Louis XVI's France), or between siblings (Louis XVI often clashed with his younger brother, the comte de Provence). In the nineteenth century, civil wars were fought between rival branches of the houses of Bourbon in Spain or Bragança in Portugal. The issue of the apanage also resurfaced in the nineteenth century, when the count of Artois, younger brother of the restored Louis XVIII, was given a financial settlement rather than the restoration of his lands and feudal powers. The question of the exercise of power by someone sitting so close to, though not on, the throne persisted until the very end of the age of monarchy.

[49] Cooley, "Kent and Primogeniture," 329.